FARM LABOR NEWS

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NO MORE FOREIGN LABOR?

The Federal Advisory Council of the Employment Security Bureau, meeting in Washington Dec. 16, voted to discontinue all programs for importing foreign agricultural labor in the year 1950.

The following resolution was adopted by a majority of 13 to 5:

"That the U. S. Employment Service advise all agencies of government that there are sufficient numbers of American citizens available for farm work to meet any anticipated requirements for manpower on the nation's farms during the coming year, and that there is no longer any need for importation of foreign labor. We therefore recommend that no international agreements be negotiated or any other arrangements be made during the coming year (1950) for recruitment of foreign workers and further, that the U. S. Employment Service withdraw all pending certifications of need for foreign agricultural workers now employed in the United States, upon completion of their present contracts."

This resolution which was the subject of considerable discussion, was proposed by James Brownlow, Secretary, Metal Trades Department, American Federation of Labor and seconded by Omar Ketchum, Washington representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Another resolution offered by Clarence Mitchell, Washington representative of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, called upon the U. S. Employment Service to utilize the services of the National Farm Labor Union A.F.L. and other bona fide farm labor organizations in recruiting and placing domestic agricultural workers, was also adopted. This resolution was aimed at the practice of the various state employment services using labor contractors in recruitment and placement of migrant farm workers on a fee basis.

H. L. Mitchell, President of the National Farm Labor Union AFL, said if these two resolutions are put into effect by the Secretary of Labor, some of the most pressing problems of the nation's farm workers will be on the road to solution.

Backfire

Observing the unhappy expression on the face of the lank customer entering his store, the merchant in a small Kentucky town said: "What's wrong, Zeke?"

"Aw, that danged old mule of mine balked on me again," Zeke replied.

"Did you build a fire under him and make him move?" asked the merchant.

"Yep," said Zeke, "but the ornery critter moved jist fur enough to pull the wagon over the fire and burn it up."

Cotton Acreage Cuts To Displace Labor In 1950

Throughout the cotton belt there are protests arising over the government allotments for the number of acres to be planted in cotton. Those doing most of the protesting are big cotton planters who have been making millions out of unlimited cotton acreage during and since World War II. Claiming to be concerned with the displacement of labor, planters are making predictions that there will be another highway sit down in 1950 in Southeast Missouri rivaling that of 1939. As usual the man who will feel the brunt of reduction in cotton acreage will be the little farmer who was only raising small crops of cotton and the farm worker who will find only one-third as many jobs chopping and picking next season. If there are any protests made, it will be the farm workers, not the cotton planters who sit down on the highways.

Alabama Women Set Up Burial Co-op

One of the best reports of self help we have run across comes from Reform Ala. A few years ago Mrs. Rosie Jones and several other women got together and set up a sickness and death benefit society to take care of expenses when sickness and death struck any family in the rural community where they live. The cause of these women deciding to do something about helping themselves came from a remark made by some of the leading white citizens of the town who said "We are tired of burying every Negro who dies." The women decided to do something about taking care of their own after the men refused to do anything.

Every member was charged 10c a month. The only man that was allowed to join was a messenger boy, in case messages had to be sent out at night. The women now have a large bank account. They have paid out hundreds of dollars to care for the sick and bury the dead. In the early days of the organization they were able to pay only $45 for a burial but now they are paying $250 each time a member dies. The National Farm Labor Union insurance policy started operating last spring and this helped carry on the good work the women started in Reform.

Calif. Official Mourns Labor Surplus— Too Late

(CFLNL) SAN FRANCISCO—Long-voiced fears of the National Farm Labor Union, AFL, were officially confirmed last week when Edward F. Hayes, chief of the State Department of Agriculture's Farm Placement Bureau, declared that the California farm labor problem is essentially one of surplus workers.

Hayes told members of the State Board of Agriculture there is currently an estimated surplus of nearly 10,000 cotton pickers alone, despite the fact that the San Joaquin Valley cotton crop is only 60 percent harvested.

National Farm Labor Union leaders had vigorously challenged the policy of importing Mexican labor this summer on the grounds that, even at that time, there was a surplus of farm workers in California.

Nevertheless, the Mexican labor plan proceeded through the cooperation of federal and state employment agencies.

Join Labor's League For Political Education. DO IT NOW!

Borden Swallows Dairy Business

Big business gets bigger every year. The Borden Co., one of the dairy industry's big three, is a good example of the octopus-like growth of giant corporations.

From 1940 to 1947, the Borden concern bought up 30 other companies. Twenty-two of them were dairies.

One a Year At Least

Borden got at least one new company each year in that period except in 1942. In 1945 alone, Borden purchased seven businesses.

The economic power of the Borden Co. was extended in widely scattered areas of the nation—New York City; Dothan, Ala.; Midland, Tex.; Junction City, Wis.; Philadelphia; Chicago; Waterloo, Iowa.

The Federal Trade Commission reports Borden is the second largest dairy concern in the nation, owning more than one-fifth of the industry's net capital assets. National Dairy Products Corp. is bigger, with better than one-fourth of the net assets. The third largest is Carnation Co., which controls 7 per cent of the assets. The three own 56 per cent of the industry's assets.

CONVENTION MEETING

Fresno, California

The 16th Annual Convention of the National Farm Labor Union, A. F. of L., will meet in the city of Fresno, California on Friday January 13. About 300 delegates from 24 of the 48 United States are expected to attend.

The farm workers delegates will take up the serious problems of unemployment, mechanization and work out programs to meet the current crisis in agriculture.

Among the speakers invited to attend and address the Convention are: Ralph Wright, Assistant Secretary of Labor, Washington D. C.; C. J. Haggerty, Secretary, California Federation of Labor, San Francisco; Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, candidate for the United States Senate seat now held by Sheridan Downey of California. Also expected to address the convention are:

Assemblyman, Joe Lewis of Kern County and Alexander H. Schullman of Los Angeles, attorney who handled the Di Giorgio case in behalf of the Union.

Secretary Of Agriculture Asks Aid For Farm Workers

Charles F. Brannan, in a recent statement to the Joint Committee of Congress studying low income families, called for social security benefits, minimum wages, job placement and transportation aids for workers on the land.

Ernest Neal, Director Rural Life Council of Tuskegee Institute told the same committee that the "old south is in the midst of a revolution." He said that when the flame flowing cotton chopper is brought in along with the tractor and mechanical picker there is no longer a need for a large labor supply and the ex-tenant family must move on. Mr. Neal said these displaced farm workers seek employment that requires the lowest skills, live in the cheapest houses in worst sections of the cities and contribute more than their share to crime, unemployment and relief. Mr. Neal called for special training to be given Negro workers by land grant colleges in operating farm machinery.

What did the Calf say to the Silo?

I don't know!

Is my Fodder in there?

★ Season's Greetings ★

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Report of the Ex

NATIONAL FARM LABO

Fresno, California
January 13, 1950

To: The Officers And Delegates Of The 16th Annual Convention

1949 was a year of great importance to all workers on the land. It marked a beginning of a crusade of those who earn their living on the nation's farms to secure for themselves some of the good things of life, which all other American workers take for granted. Among these things that go to make up the good life are: a fair return for their labor; a decent home in which to live; education for their children; security in periods of unemployment and old age. Most American citizens have gained all or part of these things in the last 16 years. However, those whose labor produces the nation's food and fiber crops—the basic products of life itself—are excluded from the benefits of all social security measures adopted in the past 16 years. Among the reasons for such exclusion of the workers on the land is that up until now they have been unorganized, disfranchised, and unable to make their wants and needs known.

However, the turning point came for all who work on the land here in California during the past fall. Some of us may not realize the importance to all agricultural workers of the step that was taken when over 100,000 men, women and children engaged in picking the state's huge cotton crop refused to accept a wage cut imposed by their lords and masters, and spontaneously rose in righteous wrath against their oppressors. It was fortunate that the National Farm Labor Union had been organizing in the San Joaquin Valley for nearly three years and was here to provide the leadership that brought victory to the workers.

THE COTTON PICKERS' STRIKE

To recount recent history, the National Farm Labor Union on September 12, 1949 authorized its representatives to give leadership and direction to the revolt of the workers engaged in harvesting California's cotton crop. These workers had refused to accept a drastic wage cut of more than $1 per day. The Union organized caravans of jalopies loaded with pickets who rode from ranch to ranch calling out the workers who were picking cotton at the Associated Farmers' price.

Men who had been active in the long strike on the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation ranch in Kern County were among the leaders of the caravans. Although the Di Giorgio strike had been stymied for over 2 years through the use of strike breakers and court injunctions under the reprehensible Taft-Hartley law, the fact that the Union had stood firm gave the farm workers assurance that their organization would not let them down. In spite of attempts to intimidate the strikers through adoption of county ordinances, prohibiting the movement of caravans, the use of loud speakers, and the arrest of 15 men, the strike was brought to a successful conclusion.

As in the Di Giorgio strike, the small farmers knew that the Union was not directing its activities toward them, but against those large farm operators who make up the Associated Farmers, Inc. One of the leading small farm operators publicly announced that he was paying the wage of $3.00 per hundred pounds asked by the Union. This announcement was followed by many small farmers accepting the wage the Union was asking. The little business men in the rural towns and communities who were depending on the business of the farm workers as their main source of income, also gave loyal support to their customers and patrons.

WAGES AND RECOGNITION OF UNION WON

The intervention of the State Conciliation and Mediation Service was requested by the Union and on September 18, the Service succeeded in getting an agreement acceptable to the Union and representative growers. Both the Union and the growers agreed to make no public statements to the press and radio. A few die-hards among the large growers refused to accept the settlement terms. The Union was then released by the Conciliation Service from its pledge not to publicize the settlement terms through press and radio. In three days the big farms which were holding out met the Union terms and the strike was over. The terms of the settlement of the cotton pickers' strike provided Union wages and recognition by the growers of the Union as the representative of the workers. This is the basic provision of any collective bargaining agreement.

The victory by members of the National Farm Labor Union is the first time since the organization of the Associated Farmers that a settlement affecting large numbers of workers had been made on the workers' terms. The defeat of the Associated Farmers was due to a number of factors, among them were the following:

1. The farm workers were represented by a national union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and thus had spokesmen in Washington.
2. The farm workers were supported by organized labor through the central labor unions, and the bucking of the powerful California Federation of Labor.
3. The large farm operators were unable to mobilize small farmers and independent business men to break the strike by force and violence.
4. The public in general considered the workers' demands for the same wage as paid in 1948 as a just one.

The result of the victory of the farm workers in California has been the extension of organization in areas directly affected by the strike. 15 new locals and 5,000 new members have come into the ranks of the National Farm Labor Union. Encouragement was given to farm workers throughout the country to organize into the Union. New locals have been chartered in other areas of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi and Alabama since the strike was won.

FARM LABOR ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

Plans for a large scale organizing campaign among workers on the land were made at the 67th. Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor in St. Paul, as a part of the campaign for one million new members, as a memorial to the founder of the A.F. of L., Samuel Gompers, in honor of the 100th. anniversary of his birth being celebrated in 1950.

This organizing campaign is being supported financially and otherwise by the American Federation of Labor, the California Federation of Labor, the central labor unions and a number of the powerful international unions in the AFL. Among those internationals making contributions to the farm labor organizing fund are: International Ladies Garment Workers Union; the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of N.A.; the Hotel, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union; and the Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermakers. While the farm workers' organizing campaign is not confined to California alone, it is centered here in the San Joaquin Valley at the moment. We expect to have the majority of farm workers in this area organized before the end of the year 1950.

NO STRIKE AGREEMENT

The establishment of widespread organization among farm workers will impose on the National Farm Labor Union the responsibility for the best interests of all engaged in agriculture. This includes the employers, workers, and business interests dependent on agriculture as well as the public in general.

Heretofore, farm operators have refused to recognize farm labor unions or to bargain with them over wages and working conditions of their employees, on the basis of an alleged fear that strikes would be called during the harvest season, and that the grower would lose his investment in perishable crops. This argument has been advanced by every industry in existence wherever workers have organized.

The National Farm Labor Union reiterates its position in this matter: The Union will bargain with employers and agree upon a fair wage in advance of the harvest of any crop grown on a farm. Further, any controversy arising between its members and their employer will be submitted to impartial arbitration. The Union will bind its members to accept the result of such arbitration, and no work stoppages will occur while any question is being arbitrated.

UNION TO SUPPLY EMPLOYERS WITH LABOR

The National Farm Labor Union will also supply employers with whom it has contractual relations, the manpower needed to harvest seasonal crops. The Union has had experience in the business of supplying seasonal labor to employers since 1942 and it has experienced workers qualified to fill any job on a farm. An orderly, organized labor supply in large scale agriculture is recognized as one of the main factors in successful farming. No farmer would place his dependence on a haphazard method of financing his farm operation, and there is no reason why he should run the risk of loss due to the lack of manpower. To stabilize agricultural employment for the benefit of both the worker and the employer is the function of the National Farm Labor Union.

ORGANIZATION IN OTHER FIELDS

In Louisiana and New York state the independent dairy farm operator has found a new source of strength by joining the National Farm Labor Union. In Louisiana, dairy farm members of the Union who are small producers long exploited by distributors in the New Orleans milkshed, banded together over a year ago. They have pooled their resources and built their own milk cooling plants. They now have a bargaining power heretofore unknown and are receiving a better price for the products of their labor. In New York state, up near the Canadian border, there are several thousand

Executive Board

ABOR UNION, A.F. OF L.

small milk producers who, after years of experience with various types of organization, are now coming into the National Farm Labor Union. Similar groups of small farmers throughout the country are turning to trade unions as a means of bargaining with the middle man for a fairer share of the products of their labor.

The National Farm Labor Union welcomes the dairymen. There is no harder working group of people on the land. They put in long hours and receive less return on their investment and labor than any other group. The dairy industry which is controlled by a milk trust is the only industry in America which purchases its raw material on the basis of the use to which the product is put. For instance, milk that is sold in bottles brings one price to the producer, milk that goes in cheese and ice cream brings another price to the farmer. In addition to that, the government has complicated methods for controlling and pricing the products so that the dairyman never knows what he is going to get for his labor.

Other workers who have been organized by the National Farm Labor Union are tree experts in New England, the Atlantic coast states and Ohio. Labor Relations Board elections have been won by workers employed by a number of tree expert companies and 8 contracts negotiated for these workers, providing wage increases and improved conditions of employment. There are citrus fruit pickers in Florida who are members of the Union. The cotton field workers, sharecroppers and tenant farmers in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Mississippi who were first organized in 1934, continue to be the backbone of the National Farm Labor Union. There are 275 chartered local unions and members in 24 of the 48 states.

LEGISLATION

In its report to the convention in 1948, the Executive Board made the following statement: "It should be remembered that the securing of legislation is a slow process and the incoming Congress, dominated as it will be by reactionary politicians of both parties, does not offer much hope of progressive legislation." At that time we realized that we had a hard fight ahead to secure national legislation to benefit agricultural workers.

Although labor in general made gains by electing a number of its friends in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate, it did not have a majority favorable to its program. Although President Truman was elected with the support of organized labor, only a few of the objectives of his administration have been enacted. The notorious Taft-Hartley law has not been repealed. The minimum wage law was changed to raise the wages to 75c an hour but fewer people are covered under the new law than under the old.

THE UNION'S PROGRAM

Early in January the Legislative Committee of the National Farm Labor Union drafted a legislative program for agricultural labor and submitted it to members of Congress. This basic program was as follows:

1. An amendment to the Social Security Act to extend old age pensions to all farm people.
2. Legislation to provide housing for farm families living both on and off the farms.
3. An amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act to set a floor under wages of farm workers on large scale commercial or industrial type farms.
4. Inclusion of agricultural workers employed on large farms under the new labor relations law.

The above program was also submitted to the National Legislative Council of the American Federation of Labor. This Council is composed of representatives of each of the 105 national and international unions affiliated with the A.F. of L.

Since the main fight of organized labor was to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, the National Farm Labor Union agreed not to press for an amendment to this law to include farm workers pending the repeal. However, the AFL Legislative Council supported the other three points in the basic program of the Farm Labor Union. Representatives of the National Farm Labor Union appeared before the House and Senate labor committees urging repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, telling the story of the use of the injunction by the General Counsel of the NLRB in behalf of the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, while at the same time denying any benefits under the law to the Di Giorgio strikers. In connection with the testimony of the Union before the House Education and Labor Committee, the movie, "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty," was shown on Capitol Hill.

HOUSING FOR FARM WORKERS

The National Farm Labor Union, supported by the American Federation of Labor, urged the Senate and House Banking and Currency Committee to write into the housing law a provision whereby, 10 per cent of all new housing should be allocated to the use of farm workers living in rural communities off the farm. This suggestion was incorporated into the law as adopted. The Union also supported the provisions for loans and grants to be made to farmers for constructing housing for their own use, and for tenants, sharecroppers and hired hands living directly on the land. The sale of former F.S.A. camps was postponed until July, 1950 and there is a chance that these homes may yet be saved for farm workers.

WAGE AND HOUR LAW

When the new Fair Labor Standards Act was drafted the Union urged the committee members to write into the act a provision whereby farm workers employed on large scale commercial or industrial type farms would be covered by minimum wage provisions. Again, with the wholehearted support of the American Federation of Labor, we had a provision inserted in the bill to include farm workers on large farms. However, two of the domestic members hitherto voting with labor, were pressed by the National Farm Bureau to vote against the inclusion of agricultural workers and it was defeated before reaching the floor of the House.

The new farm bill passed by Congress revises the parity price index to include the costs of labor hired by employers. Thus Congress is guaranteeing the farm operator a price that includes the cost of paying the wages of agricultural workers. They cannot long continue to exclude such workers under the minimum wage law.

THE BRANNAN PLAN

One of the most sensible proposals advanced for solving the farm problem is the plan offered by Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brannan. Under the Brannan Plan farm prices would be permitted to drop to the market level and the government would then make up the difference in the price received by the farmer and the average price based on the income from products during the war years.

Under the present law, everyone is taxed to guarantee the farmers a fair price and then must pay high prices when he buys groceries and other necessities. The Brannan Plan is being widely supported by organized labor and the farm workers would stand to benefit by its adoption. This plan will be one of the main issues in the 1950 election.

SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENTS

The Union appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee to urge the inclusion of all farmers and farm workers under the Social Security Act. This committee headed by 80 year old Robert L. Daughton of North Carolina and dominated by a combination of Dixiecrats and Republican reactionaries, refused to include any farm people in the legislation which was adopted by the House of Representatives amending the Social Security Act. However, hearings have not been held by the Senate committee. The Union and the American Federation of Labor will put up a strong fight to include both farmers and farm workers under the old age pensions and other provisions of the Social Security Act this year. Before the law is finally adopted, we hope to succeed in securing coverage for all who are now left out in the cold.

OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION OF FARM LABOR PROBLEMS

Among the other legislative matters worked on by the Union was the securing of a Congressional Investigation of the problems of farm labor. A bill was prepared and a number of congressmen and senators were interested in supporting it. However, it was found that due to a change in congressional procedure, no legislation of this type creating special committees could even be introduced without the consent of the House Rules Committee. The House Rules Committee has long been the bottle neck of progressive legislation. Failing in this effort, we secured a promise from the Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee that he would appoint a sub-committee to conduct hearings on farm labor. This finally came down to an investigation of the Di Giorgio strike by the House Education and Labor sub-committee which was held in Bakersfield on November 12. and 13th. After the hearings the Chairman of the sub-committee, Congressman Bailey of West Virginia, publicly announced his intention of drafting legislation to be introduced during the coming session of the 81st. Congress to include farm workers under minimum wages and the labor relations law.

A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

On September 28th. the National Farm Labor Union addressed a letter to President Truman concerning the plight of the 3 million American citizens who work on farms, and suggested the appointment of a Presidential Commission to inquire into farm labor problems. On November 5, President Truman replied to this letter stating that, "The Department (of Labor) also currently is exploring the feasibility of recommending the establishment of a Presidential Commission to investigate the problems of agricultural labor."

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN LABOR

A matter requiring constant attention of the National Farm Labor Union

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has been the program for "Importation of Foreign Labor." Over the protests of the Union and the American Federation of Labor, but at the demands of a few large farm operators, the U. S. Department of State began negotiations with the Republic of Mexico for a renewal of the International Agreement for importing Mexican Nationals for farm work. The agreement was signed on August 1, and provided among other things that illegal aliens, "Wetbacks" from Mexico, should be legalized to engage in farm work. The U. S. Employment Service was also made the agent of the farm operators in carrying out the agreement. Up to November 4, 1949, a total of 90,526 Mexicans had been placed on farm jobs. 71,067 were wetbacks who had been legalized and 19,459 had been imported directly from Mexico. They were employed in the following states:

Arizona	5,834	Mississippi	1,454
Colorado	124	Missouri	2,931
Arkansas	17,986	Montana	627
Kentucky	87	New Mexico	18,937
California	3,575	Tennessee	191
Louisiana	1,267	Texas	37,504

These workers have been a factor in depressing wages of American citizens and this is well known to all who work on the farms. The fact that these foreign workers are being imported for the sole purpose of aiding large farm operators to beat down the wages of Americans is also well known.

Following the signing of the Mexican Agreement, Union members in California protested by picketing the Mexican General Counsul's office in Los Angeles. This action no doubt played a part in reducing the number of Mexican Nationals employed in California. As is noted above, thousands of Mexican Nationals were also employed in picking cotton in the mid-southern states. Cotton picking wages were cut from $3.25 per 100 pounds in Mississippi to $2.10 per 100 in 1949. In Arkansas wage rates fell from $3.25 in 1948 to $2.65 in 1949, with similar reductions wherever the Mexican Nationals were employed in the south and south-western cotton growing regions.

If the foreign labor importation program is continued another year, it will be necessary for the Union to devise a more effective method of protesting the use of these workers to lower the living standards of American citizens.

INSURANCE POLICIES FOR UNION MEMBERS

On April 15, 1949 the National Farm Labor Union put into effect a new provision in its constitution. This was to provide members of the Union with a paid up life insurance policy as one of the benefits of Union membership. An arrangement was made for a group life insurance policy to be issued by the Union Labor Life Insurance Co. of New York City. This policy provides $250 insurance to all members who are not over 60 years of age at the time they join, and who have paid 3 months or more membership dues. The policy remains in force as long as the insured member continues to pay his or her monthly dues promptly.

This insurance program has meant a great increase in the work of the national office in keeping individual records on each of the insured members. Organizers and local unions have also had to share the burden of extra work in getting their members insured. Some of the local unions have made a practice of collecting 3 months membership dues at the time a person joins the Union, filling out his insurance application and submitting it with their local reports. Thus each new member is automatically covered by the group insurance policy.

This insurance policy has been a means of increasing interest among members of the local unions and has served to keep members paying their dues on a regular basis. We list below the names and addresses of those members who have died since this group insurance policy has been in effect. Their beneficiary was paid promptly by the Union Labor Life Insurance Co. upon receipt of the required forms at the national office of the Union:

B. C. Griffin, Cotton Plant, Ark. (died July 24, 1949)
Ambrose Harris, Edmondson, Ark. (died September 12, 1949)
John F. Hynds, Spruce Pine, Ala. (died September 16, 1949)
James Johnson, Sarasota, Fla. (died August 21, 1949)
Victoria Lathion, Reform, Ala. (died August 3, 1949)
Willie Strickland, Edmondson, Ark. (died July, 1949)

EDUCATIONAL WORK

For the past two years the Union has had two persons on its staff doing educational work directly with the local officers and members. Motion pictures and other types of material have been used. Some new material has been developed for use by organizers and local officers. A series of 24 film strips based on problems of the Union and its program has been planned, however, it has not been possible to complete this material.

The Farm Labor News, monthly journal of the Union, has not been published regularly during the past year. However, it is planned to resume publication on a regular basis in 1950. It is recommended that the Convention authorize the appointment of an editorial board to work with the President in preparing the paper each month and to arrange for distribution to all members through the local unions.

In connection with our educational program it must be understood that the first job of the Union is to build organization by soliciting membership and setting up new locals. At this stage we cannot undertake to carry on formal educational programs with classes or instruction. However, every organizer is engaged in educational work when he meets with local union officers and instructs them how to conduct the business of the Union. Every meeting that is held is educational, and every speech that is made is a part of the process of educating our membership. Each time a member of the Union talks to a non-member, he is teaching others.

POLITICAL ACTION BY THE FARM LABOR UNION MEMBERS

The most reactionary members in the Congress of the United States come from rural areas where there are large scale farms and huge numbers of hired farm workers, tenants and sharecroppers. This is also true of the legislatures of the various states. Politicians representing the interests of large scale farming enterprises join with industrialists, bankers and railroad special-interest groups to defeat the welfare of the common people.

One of the reasons for the big farmers' opposition to organization by their employees stems from the fear that their political power may be overthrown once the people at the bottom of the agricultural ladder are organized into trade unions.

The National Farm Labor Union calls upon all of its members and their families to qualify as voters and to cast their ballots in all elections. It urges every member to take part in the campaign being waged by the A.F. of L. League for Political Education to elect the friends of organized labor and defeat its enemies. Labor's League for Political Education has called upon all members of the A.F. of L. to make a voluntary contribution of not less than $2.00 during the year 1950 for use in the congressional campaigns. One half of the amount collected in each state will be returned for use in the campaign in the state where the contributor lives.

The members of the National Farm Labor Union have more to gain by a successful outcome of the 1950 congressional elections than any other group in America.

If enough congressmen and senators can be elected who will support the program of organized labor in the coming election, the farm workers of the nation will be benefited by having most of their program adopted in the 82nd. Congress which will meet in January, 1951.

Rural Life Group Backs Unions For Farm Labor

Columbus, Ohio — The National Catholic Rural Life Conference's 27th annual convention held here last month devoted a great deal of attention to the problems of farm laborers and the owners of family-sized farms.

In a special policy statement, the Conference had this to say about the problem of farm workers:

"Farm laborers, particularly those in seasonal agriculture, must not be excluded from exercise of the right to organize and bargain collectively under the law.

"They must not be exploited by commercial growers without regard for their human dignity, or their individual and family needs.

OPPORTUNITIES for necessary social services, health care, proper education of children, decent housing, and reasonable economic security are the right of the farm labor group just as much as any other portion of the population.

"In this way not only will we protect our agricultural workers from being degraded into an impoverished rural proletariat, but we will also further the cause of the family-type farm.

"If all big growers treated their workers as human beings, the smaller farm on which only the family workers or on which only one or several hired hands are employed would actually have a competitive advantage. Big-scale agriculture, particularly when it has to pay large wage bills is not necessarily efficient.

FATHER T. J. Radtke, secretary of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking, gave a graphic account of the problems of farm laborers in the Southwest:

"The people are moved about from ranch to ranch—they move with the crops, they wander all over the state, all over several states, wherever there is work. They live under trucks, under the very few trees, in tents, in chicken coops . . .

"Who are these people? They are the poor . . . They are paid miserable wages sometimes as low as 25 cents an hour, and therefore they remain poor.

"The average number of children in these families is four. When the family goes out into the harvest, of course all the children are taken along. The children work in the fields along with the father and mother. The more cotton you bring in, the more you make in wages.

"Did I hear someone say something about child labor laws? Well, on the part of the big ranchers, who cares about a few thousand children? Who cares about the law? And on the part of the parents: you have to make money while it can be made if you want to eat at all."

THE CONFERENCE and its speakers used strong language to back up the family-sized farm:

"National and international action taken to bring about (fair agricultural) prices should be such as to protect and foster this family-type, owner-operated farm."

Father William Gibbons, S. J., summed up the attitude of the Conference leaders in a talk given to the convention:

"The family-type farm must be strengthened and made the dominant form of agricultural enterprise. When large industrial-type farms have become the pattern or where they may seem permissible for special economic reasons, they must be regulated and controlled just as any other form of monopoly.

"Price support aids and other benefits to agriculture should be given primarily to the family farmer who does a decent job on his land and with his land, and not to the large producers who least need the help.

"Cooperatives and organization among family-type farmers must be encouraged and fostered. What the family-type farmer cannot do by himself, he can do in cooperation with others."